

SIMON KENTON.

A Brave Kentuckian of the Early Days.

Some Interesting Depositions—Frontier Life in the Wilds of Ohio.

Original Survey—The Virginia Military Lands—U. S. Tract, Western Reserve, Symmes Purchase, etc., etc.

Valuable Researches among Time-Tested Records, from Days of Hardship and Danger that Tried the Metal of the Pioneers.

The recent June number of *Harper's Magazine* contains an article on the subject of "The Kentucky Pioneers," from the pen of John Mason Brown. Among other illustrations is found a copy of the features of Simon Kenton, taken from a painting owned by Robert Clarke, Cincinnati, Ohio.

To gaze a moment upon the picture as shown one would suppose that he was inspecting the face of a genial old clerical gentleman, in whose expression there beamed gentleness and goodness, and whose heart was full of the "milk of human kindness"—with his frame clad in the regulation garments and necktie of the day and generation of those who lived at the time of the taking of the portrait, very much unlike the supposed appearance of the doughty pioneer, who was one of the bravest and most daring of the Indian fighters. How much in contrast is the description as given by the chronicler of his appearance in his palmy days of danger and hardships. Says the writer: "General Kenton was of fair complexion, six feet one inch in height. He stood and walked very erect, and in the prime of life weighed about one hundred and ninety pounds. He never was inclined to be corpulent, although of sufficient fullness to form a graceful person. He had a soft, tremulous voice, very pleasing to the hearer. He had laughing, grey eyes, which appeared to fascinate the beholder. He was a pleasant, good-humored and obliging companion. When excited or provoked to anger (which was seldom the case) the fiery glance of his eye would almost curdle the blood of those with whom he came in contact. In his dealing he was perfectly honest; his confidence in man and his credulity were such that the same man might cheat him twenty times, and if he professed friendship, he might cheat him still."

Imagine Kenton arrayed in the costume of the pioneer, as described in the article referred to. The "coat" or "hunting shirt" that reached to the thigh was of coarse cloth, or preferably of well-dressed deer skin, that turned rain and was not readily torn. Around the neck and shoulders was a fringe, six inches long, not intended for ornament alone, but supplying the string so often needed by a hunter. The four pockets, two on either breast, were exactly placed that the use of weapons should not be embarrassed. A belt, carrying tomahawk and knife, passed through loops at the back, and was tightened by a buckle or thong.

Beneath the right arm swung the bullet-pouch, and with it the powder-horn. In the former were carried the bullets, the cotton "patching," with which the balls were surrounded in loading, and the precious extra flints, all enclosed and fastened in interior pockets lest in rapid movements they might be lost. The powder-horn was selected with reference to the curve of the body, that it might lie close and neither impede the use of the right arm nor become entangled with the bushes or cane. Much care was bestowed upon its adornment, and it was softened by boiling to receive the right shape and preparation.

At the left side hung the tomahawk, a light hatchet with curved blade, useful in many ways about the camp and a formidable weapon in close combat. The knife lay across the chest within ready grasp. Over his short trousers and stockings the hunter habitually wore deer-skin leggings that reached to the middle thigh. There were prepared of brain-dressed skins, that perfectly turned the rain and dew. Along their outer edge were often fringes of strings hanging ready for use. The feet were cased in moccasins, to which soles of raw-hide were sometimes sewed; but, as a rule, the soft elk skin was preferred, for the face of the land was as yet an unbroken turf or forest mound—soft and springy to the tread; stone dropped out as cultivation disturbed the soil in after years. A cap brought from the eastern settlers or made of the skin of a coon or panther completed the costume. What a noble specimen of manhood must Kenton have appeared clad in this outfit!

Simon determined on revenge, and afterwards meeting with his assailant, chastised him so severely that he left him for dead. After reflecting, feeling that he was a murderer, he fled to the woods and made for the Allegheny Mountains. This was on the 6th of April, 1771.

This rash act drove him from his home. He became a fugitive from justice—a prey to remorse and fear. He changed his name, became a wanderer—illiterate, penniless and friendless.

No wonder that the stirring scenes of frontier life, with its dangers and hairbreadth escapes—with its alternate days of famine and plenty—of solitude in the wilderness and of life in the block-house and cabin—gave zest in its variety to the tortured mind of Simon, and rendered him a willing captive to the vicissitudes of such an existence. Dreading punishment and disgrace in the home of his youth, his mental moods were of that sort to well him for the blood-thirsty work of the destruction of the cruel and treacherous savage, to whom he soon became, and always remained, a most inveterate foe.

It has been often asked, Where is what is called "Kenton's Trace," and through what part of Highland county did it pass? For evidence upon this question we copy a deposition signed and sworn to by Simon Kenton taken in an action of ejectment pending in the Circuit Court of the United States for the Seventh Circuit and district of Ohio, wherein the lessee of George Mathews and Charles L. Mathews was plaintiff, and Samuel Gibson and David Jolly were defendants, and recorded in the records of deeds of Highland county, book G, page 383. It was taken on the 8th day of July in the year 1811, nearly three-quarters of a century since. While it speaks of familiar characters and of lands in our immediate locality, as a matter of interest it will justify the introduction of the entire paper.

State of Ohio, Highland County, ss. Pursuant to an act of the first session of the Eighth General Assembly of the State of Ohio, begun and held at Chillicothe, December the fourth day in the year one thousand eight hundred and nine, entitled An act providing the mode of perpetuating testimony in certain cases. Personally appeared before us two associate judges of the county of Highland, viz: Jonathan Berreman and Richard Evans, and after having been duly sworn according to law, the deponent, Simon Kenton, of the county of Champaign and State aforesaid, who was formerly a resident of the State of Kentucky, deposed and said that on the 2d day of May, in the year 1791, he made an encampment on the waters of Paint Creek the time that (he) the said Simon Kenton and his men went to where Timothy Downing killed the Indian, which said encampment is the center of a square including 500 acres running north, south, east and west, for quantity entered for Samuel Gibson by Henry Delay, and the deponent further deposed and said that the above described encampment is here at this identical spot by a sugar tree marked thus: S. G., for the initials of Samuel Gibson, the proper owner of said 500 owners.

Interrogations by Samuel Gibson to the said defendant (viz:) Did you encamp any more than one night on the waters of Paint Creek? Answered by the said deponent, No. Do you think a skillful and experienced surveyor, immediately after your return home to Kentucky, could have found the above described encampment by your direction, in order to make a survey according to the entry made and returned to Col. R. C. Anderson's office alluded to as above?

The deponent answered, Yes. Do you recollect whether Gen. Nathaniel Massie was present at Col. Anderson's office when Samuel Gibson's entry of 500 acres was returned to said office by Henry Delay, yourself being present? The answer by the deponent, Yes. Do you think the said Gen. Massie wrote an entry or made a statement of the above entry of 500 acres in the name of Samuel Gibson in writing expressive of the location?

Answered by the deponent, Yes. Do you think that after a record of the entry or location was made in Col. Anderson's office that any skillful surveyor experienced in the woods could have found the said encampment without any other information than a copy of the entry?

The answer by the said deponent, Yes. And further the said deponent said not. Given under my hand this 8th day of July, in the year 1811.

SIMON KENTON, Deponent.

RICHARD EVANS, Associate Judge. JONATHAN BERREMAN, Judge.

In a subsequent deposition in the same case, prepared for Simon Kenton on the 24th day of June, 1825, by Richard Collins, Esq., a pioneer lawyer of the Hillsboro bar, now deceased, and by whose son, Charles H. Collins, Esq., now practicing at the bar, we were kindly furnished with the original manuscript, there is the following statement: "In the spring of the year 1791, with between sixty and eighty men under his command, part footmen and part horsemen, started from 'Limestone' (now called Mayville), Kentucky, in order to find the Indian camp on a creek that is now called Anderson's fork, and where Timothy Downing, a citizen of the vicinity of Limestone, had been a prisoner among the Indians, and who there had killed an Indian and made his escape to that settlement in Kentucky, which settlement, or the three islands in the Ohio River, was the nearest settlement of white people to the Indian camp. On his route he passed through what is now known as Highland county, crossed a south branch of Paint Creek, now called the Rocky Fork. The season being wet and the ground soft the horsemen marched in single file and made a considerable trace or path, which was visible for years. The company encamped for the night on

the land now claimed by Samuel Gibson, one of the defendants, and was the same spot shown this day to Joseph Woodrow and Richard Collins. The Indian encampment where Downing killed the Indian was a large encampment, and was called a winter encampment for the Indians." [This encampment was supposed to be in what is now called Clinton county.] "The deponent was at the camp on Gibson's entry in the years 1811 and 1818. The country at that time was almost wholly unexplored, and no other trace or path in that part of the country made by horsemen. So that there could be no mistake as to the trace."

While on this scout in the year 1791 Simon Kenton encamped within three-fourths of a mile of "Kelly's Lick," and shot a deer there. Kelly's lick is about four hundred yards northeast of Aaron Kelly's house, and near the Little Rocky Fork. There is now no trace of salt. It was called "Kelly's Lick" after Ezekiel Kelly, the father of Aaron Kelly, who was a noted hunter at an early day, and supplied the neighborhood with venison. Kenton's encampment was made on the farm now owned by James Carlisle, Esq., and lies directly north of the lick about three-fourths of a mile. When, twenty years after, in the year 1811, Kenton being brought back to testify in the case before mentioned, as to the lines and corners of Gibson's survey, said that he remembered to have killed a deer at a lick near the encampment. After going to the lick and shaping his course for the camp, he observed after stopping, that he was on the spot, and if he was, they would find an ash tree with a tomahawk mark in it. The tree was found and examined, and corroborated his statement. It will thus appear that Kenton had been at this camp at three different times, in the years 1791, 1811, and 1818.

Samuel Gibson, one of the defendants in the suit mentioned in this sketch, was a resident of Kentucky, and moved to his land in the Rocky Fork of Paint Creek seven years after the entry was made for him by Kenton. Gibson erected a mill where Bishir's dam now is, and which has been continuously used for the same purpose ever since. Samuel Gibson was a soldier of the Revolutionary war, and the land so located for him was in consideration for services, but the entry proving defective, he was compelled to purchase the land of which he vainly thought he was the true owner.

It might not be out of place to inquire for a moment as to the various titles to the lands within the borders of our State.

At a very early day in our Revolutionary War, Virginia had promised all her soldiers lands who served in the war, whether they were regulars, militia, or belonged to the navy, and reserved the land lying between the Scioto and Little Miami rivers, which she gave to her soldiers of the Revolution, as a reward for their services. This was called the "Virginia Military Tract."

That portion of the ceded tracts above latitude 41° North, extending from Pennsylvania on the east to the western limits of Sandusky and Seneca counties, was given by Congress to Connecticut, and is called the "Western Reserve" or "New Connecticut." Five hundred thousand acres of this tract off the west end, the State of Connecticut gave to certain sufferers by fire in the Revolutionary War, and are called "Fire Lands."

A part of the ceded lands, lying along the Ohio river, including the mouths of the Muskingum and Hocking rivers, was sold by the old Congress to the Ohio Company. This was called the "Ohio Company's Purchase."

John Cleves Symmes, of New Jersey, bought of the old Congress the land lying between the mouth of the two Miami's, and extending northerly so as to contain six hundred thousand acres—this is called "Symmes' Purchase." The United States had promised her soldiers who served during the War of the Revolution lands for their services, and Congress laid off a tract for that purpose, lying south of the "Western Reserve" or "New Connecticut," extending from the Ohio River on the east to the Scioto on the west. This is called the "United States Military Tract."

The titles to lands in the Virginia Military District were acquired by entry and survey by virtue of military land warrants, issued by the State of Virginia to her officers and soldiers of the Continental line. Each person after the expiration of the time of service, received from the government and council a certificate of his rank in the army, the length of the time of service, and the number of acres to which he was entitled, which certificate was filed with the register of the land office, and a warrant or printed paper under the seal of the office, was issued to the owner. These warrants when issued, were delivered to the owners, who were required to file them with the principal surveyor and pay him a certain fee for receiving them. The first step taken toward the acquisition of land by a warrant, was by means of entry. An entry was the appropriation of a certain quantity of vacant land by the owner of the warrant. Next in order came the survey, which was intended to give a certain and regular form to the entry by metes and bounds, actually marked and established by the surveyor. Surveys when made were returned to the general surveyor with a fair plat of each particular tract of land, and a description of the same by metes and bounds, and were signed by the deputies who executed them, together with the names of the claimants and markers annexed, who made each survey. The surveys were then recorded, and the plats with a certificate from the surveyor under his seal of office, delivered to the owner, together with the original warrant and assignments. The owner of each survey could then obtain a patent for his land from the President of the United States.

How much the generation of to-day, in the full enjoyment of quiet and security, with all the blandishments of refinement and luxury about them, are in debt to that noble and sturdy class of men of whom Simon Kenton was a peer, can not be fully estimated. Contrast the description of your own vicinity as "an unexplored region" with what now presents itself to the eye in every direction—the church, the schoolhouses, the roads, the smiling farms, the busy factories, the whizzing railroads, the clinking telegraphs, and the mysterious telephones—and over all, and above all, a free and powerful government to protect and reward.

Let us cherish the memory of those brave and devoted pioneers who encountered hardships, solitude and danger, that we might enjoy and hail with delight the recital in song or story of the deeds of the champions of the dark forests, the crack of whose rifles first awoke the depths of the primeval shades and betokened the dawn of the incoming civilization. An early bard thus pays his tribute to the memory of these departed heroes.

"Say, shall the rough woodland pioneer Of Mississippi's wide-extended vale, Claim no just tribute of our love and tears And their names vanish with the passing gale? With veteran arms the forest they subdued, With veteran arms subdued the savage foe! Our country, purchased with their valiant blood, Claims for them all that gratitude can do. Their arduous labors gave us wealth and ease, Fair freedom followed from their doubtful strife. Their well-aimed measures gave a lasting peace, And all the social blessedness of life. Then let their off-springs, mindful of their claims, Cherish their honors in the lyric bard, O save from dark oblivion's gloomy reign The brave, the worthy fathers of our land."

Teachers' Certificates. At the meeting of the Board of School Examiners on Saturday, June 4th, certificates were granted to the following named persons:

For One Year—Ollie Vanzant, Walter E. Smith, James W. Duvall, Thomas C. Coffman, Mary Shull, Nettie Duvall, Carlotta W. Walker, Chas. L. Countryman, Cora B. Gamble, Thetta A. Walker, John S. Faris, N. D. Colburn, Mary Allison, Blanch Bellerson, J. A. Roush, Fred Gamble, J. A. Head, Kitty Chaney, Guss Chaney, E. W. Cornet, M. P. Purdy, W. V. Watts, Nannie Patton, Mary Wright, Lizzie Arnett, H. Hempstead, T. A. Swadley, James H. Gail, F. J. Parshall, John Briggs.

For Two Years—Lelia Elliott, Hettie Duvall, Belle Milburn.

For Three Years—Anna Evans, J. W. Kirkhart.

The above is correct. E. G. SMITH, Clerk.

EAST MONROE. June 19th, 1887.

C. B. Hadley sold at auction Saturday last his personal effects. Theo. Douglass and wife, of Ross county, were the guests of E. Wingate's family on the 13th. H. M. Durrell, Jr., and Miss Eva Starn were married at the residence of the bride's parents on the 13th inst.

Johnny Griffith, an old Monroe boy, but now of Ross county, was among his many friends here Sunday. Children's Day passed off pleasantly. Long before the sun came up the church bells were packed. The program was lengthy and well arranged and the execution was perfect.

NEW LEXINGTON. June 13th, 1887.

Mr. Harvey Stuckey is on the sick list. Miss Ella Behmer is visiting relatives in Washington O. H. Mr. Andy Brouse and wife, of near Hillsboro, were in attendance at church here Sunday.

Joe Mackintosh was in Strasburg part of last week on business. Mr. Fred Kelly was visiting relatives in Cynthia last week. Mrs. D. A. Terrell and Miss Genie were visiting in Lebanon on Sunday.

Mr. Robert Rhodes and wife, of Kansas City, Mo., are the guests of friends here. R. B. Barrett and family are visiting friends in Hillsboro and vicinity. Mrs. James Woodmansee and wife, of New Vienna, visited his mother, Mrs. Sarah Woodmansee, on Sunday.

Meese, James Adams, Charles Swadly, and Arch Edwards, accompanied by Misses Bessie and Jessie Horman, Abbie Brabson and Kate Calvert, spent last Saturday at the Caves. MT. WASHINGTON. June 13th, 1887.

Miss Estelle Stanforth will bring the summer term of school at Wolcott to a close Friday. The undersigned, Miss Estelle, has proved to be a worthy instructor. Mrs. A. D. Wiggins and Mrs. Matthews, of the Model Town, attended divine services at this point last Sabbath.

Kider J. B. Paris delivered an able discourse at this point last Sabbath to a large congregation. He will be at Fairview next Sabbath. The county commissioners will visit the creek at a point south of Mr. Aaron Kelly's with the intention of considering the advisability of placing a bridge across the same. At a business meeting of the Mt. Washington Church yesterday the organization was made by the appointment of Deigmish Gilder and Aaron Greed to the eldership. Mr. Jacob McConnaghey and lady, of near Leesburg, visited Sunday at the place of the former's nativity.

THE NEWS OF THE WEEK.

WEDNESDAY.

Hon. James G. Blaine sailed for Europe. The feeder just completed at the Paulding reservoir in place of the one recently destroyed was again blown up.

A lodge of ninety anarchists has been discovered in Columbus, O. Four thousand Chicago barbers have petitioned the Legislature for a law compelling shops to close on Sunday.

The Russian Government has raised the duty on importations of iron and steel from 25 to 30 cents.

THURSDAY.

W. H. Green, the only colored man ever appointed to the Signal Service Department, has been discharged for incompetency.

The constitutional prohibition amendment in the Massachusetts House was defeated, lacking 3 votes of a majority. The total vote is 213.

Findlay celebrated her anniversary as the gas city of Ohio.

Editor O'Brien sailed for Queenstown. A National Quarantine Naval Patrol will assist in the suppression of infectious diseases.

FRIDAY.

F. M. Lindsey has been re-nominated for State Senator by the Democrats of Brown and Clermont counties.

An Indian outbreak in Arizona is causing much trouble. An earth convulsion at Croton, Dakota, started an artesian well and opened a seam whose depth has not been measured.

The Grant Monument Association, of New York, has advertised for plans. Natural gas was struck at Sidney and Manchester. It was found at a depth of 297 feet at the latter place.

SATURDAY.

Illinois Legislature passed a law prohibiting the sale of tobacco to minors under sixteen years.

The New York Supreme Court decided that under the present law, hotel-keepers cannot serve whisky with Sunday meals.

The Mayor, Chief of Police, two aldermen and a bank cashier of San Antonio, Texas, have been arrested on U. S. warrants for breaking up a prohibition meeting.

American vessels are now landing at Havana with cargoes for the first time in sixty years, discriminating duties having been removed by Spain.

SUNDAY.

The net increase in the coin and currency in general circulation in the year ending May 31st was \$58,566,545.

The Third Party Prohibitionists of Fayette county have put a ticket in the field.

Striking brick-layers in Chicago are angry because master masons refuse to arbitrate the existing difficulties.

President Cleveland has returned from his pleasure trip to Saranac Lake.

MONDAY.

A meteoric stone fell near St. Joseph, Ind., imbedding itself fifteen feet in the earth.

Report says Gen. Thomas Ewing will stump Ohio for the labor ticket this fall.

Gas was struck at Cumminsville at the depth of 200 feet.

Sixteen penniless Greeks from Syria landed at Castle Garden will be sent back.

TUESDAY.

Champaign county Republicans selected a Forker delegation to the State Convention.

The Bell Telephone case is being argued in Boston, Massachusetts.

All the Rebel battle flags captured in the civil war are to be returned to their respective states by order of the President.

William Mahoney was arrested for jumping from the suspension bridge at Cincinnati into the Ohio River. To-day is the 110th anniversary of the adoption of the stars and stripes as a national emblem.

Foreign.

Queen Kapiolani has arrived in London.—Farnell is improved in health and again at work.—Disastrous floods have resulted from bursting dykes in Hungary.—Germany is alarmed about the state of health of the Emperor and Crown Prince.—120 persons killed by an earthquake in Turkistan.—John Ruskin will travel for his health.

Probate Court.

D. J. Vance, guardian of Alpheus Davis, filed final account. Will of William Hewitt filed. Will of William Newkirk probated. W. H. H. Huff, guardian of the estate of Sarah Myrtle Pavey, filed fourth account. W. J. Cochran, adm'r of the estate of Virginia E. Smith, filed distributive account.

MARRIAGE LICENSES.

George E. Spencer and H. Mac Bridwell. W. O. Hall and Sarah H. Hite. J. C. Suiter and Eva J. Countryman.

Real Estate Transfers.

Thomas Hammett to Perry Whitaker and Otto Miller, Dodson township, 15 acres, \$300. Michael Dunn to Mary Riley, Liberty township, 24 acres, \$500 and other considerations. Charles Cox to Joseph P. Cox, Samanah, 100 acres, \$500.

Unclassified Letters.

List of unclassified letters remaining in the Post Office at Hillsboro, O., June 16th, 1887: Burns Oliver, Hillsboro, O. Mabin Landon, Hillsboro, O. Martin Mr. Allen, Hillsboro, O. McCoy Edward, Hillsboro, O. Simpson Catherine, Hillsboro, O. Thompson Mrs. M. E. Tribbett Lizzie, Hillsboro, O. Turner E. L. Williams H. G. Willis Levi.

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